

COLUMNS

Top 5 must-haves in your mobile apps

July 19, 2016



Kevin Nix is co-founder/CEO of Stellar Loyalty

By **Kevin Nix**

Subscribe to **Luxury Daily**
Plus: Just released
State of Luxury 2019 **Save \$246 ▶**

Every marketer wants and needs a mobile application, but what truly makes for a great one? From a top-level perspective, it should be all of these things:

- a) Purposeful: it should do one thing very well either solving a problem or meeting a customer need
- b) Targeted: it should be designed for a specific audience, while also reflecting the brand image, values and promise
- c) High quality: it must be fast, polished, stable and and easy to navigate
- d) Adaptive: it must evolve according to customers' preferences, behavior, brand product services and market needs.

With that said, specific functions of a mobile app should absolutely include:

1. A next-generation loyalty program

One of the most valuable marketing functions, if done right, is a sophisticated, next-generation loyalty program. A mobile Web site serves its own purpose, but a mobile app is perfect for rewarding repeat customers and driving frequency.

Let us face it: the loyalty card for your keychain or wallet is becoming or has become quickly pass, as it should. Who wants more stuff to keep track of?

Mobile loyalty is convenient and hassle-free, and provides immediate feedback on points and rewards. It can also help correlate data across mobile, Web, social and in-person interactions to personalize and deliver messages and offers.

Overall, loyalty apps help marketers map to personal customer preferences and enrich all interactions.

2. A way to capture the voice of the customer

Data is everything to marketers because it lets marketers market to known attributes versus the big black void.

While customer surveys can deliver enormous data value, printed surveys or even emailed URLs add too much friction to the process. The reward for participating is rarely enough to overcome this friction.

In contrast, a micro survey for example, one question at a time that takes 10 seconds to respond to integrated into the

mobile app experience allows the customer to seamlessly engage in the survey. The marketer gets an immediate data boost, the customer gets immediate rewards. Everyone is happy.

3. Entertaining and engaging user experiences

Entertaining experiences attract customer interaction. Marketers should think about their entertainment strategy and tailor it to their brand imagery and target demographic.

Games, trivia questions, selfies, social challenges and other techniques such as augmented reality can create positive brand association, fan engagement and content for further marketing and branded experiences. It also helps reduce the frustration of scenarios such as "waiting to be served" and transcends those moments into more pleasurable, branded experiences.

4. In-the-moment, in-context, location-based services

Marketers want to engage their fans anytime and anywhere, so location-based services are an obvious must-have to help deliver the right message or offer at the right time, in the right place.

Most marketers know this, but they need to start seriously considering moving away from GPS to beacons and geofencing and should choose an app platform that can handle those complexities.

GPS store locators and check-in functions are useful, but beacon technology can provide additional location capabilities such as auto-launching the app when the customer is in proximity or triggering a micro-survey upon departure.

Sports fans will love receiving alerts such as where the shortest food lines are in the stadium, and loyal lunch customers will celebrate being added to a preferred waitlist at their favorite QSR.

Beacons can also trigger auto launches of games, trivia questions and other entertaining engagement tactics within the mobile app. The possibilities are endless.

5. Mobile ordering and payment

Mobile ordering and mobile payment should be on everyone's agenda because customers are quickly gravitating to those functions and it is becoming an expected option.

Once customer expectations are set, you do not want to be battling from behind.

When mobile payments and ordering capabilities are combined with loyalty, a compelling app that delivers real value to customers speed, ease and frictionless transactions within an engaging and entertaining experience is the result.

Digital gift cards should be part of the mobile pay experience, too, as it is more convenient than carrying a physical card.

Kevin Nix is cofounder/CEO of [Stellar Loyalty](#), Foster, City, CA. Reach him at kevin.nix@stellarloyalty.com.